

# Seasonal Cycles and Australia's History

## Curriculum Links

### History

- The nature of a convict or colonial settlement in Australia, including the factors that influenced patterns of settlement, aspects of the daily life of its different inhabitants, and how they changed the environment (Yr 5, ACHHK094)
- Identify points of view in the past and present (Yr 5, ACHHS104)
- Use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies (Yr 5, ACHHS106)

### Mathematics

- (optional) Describe and interpret different data sets in context (Yr 5, ACMSP120)

### Cross-Curriculum Priorities

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Sustainability

## About this unit

In this unit, students investigate different points of view, past and present, about the seasons in Australia.

Many people believe there are four seasons and that this is just the way it is. Some believe that all Indigenous Australian cultures have six seasons. Neither of these statements is quite true: there may be three seasons to a member of the Mirriwoong people of the Northern Territory, four to someone of European origin, and six to a member of the Brambuk culture of Western Victoria. Some seasons come every few years, such as the Kulin fire and flood seasons. Seasons relate to climate but they also relate strongly to culture.

The question 'How many seasons are there?' allows us to explore understandings about the past and the present. What assumptions did European explorers and settlers make about the land when they chose locations for settlement? How did their need for food crops rest on these assumptions – and what were the consequences of misinterpreting the land?

Students explore Indigenous seasons and food cycles. They discuss the observational knowledge on which Indigenous seasons are based, and compare them to the European calendar-based system in which each season is a tidy three months long. (Here we can also bring in weather data should you need to add a numeracy and statistical/data element to the unit.)

Students create their own circular calendar, or cycle of the seasons, documenting their point of view and using their documented experiences to compare and contrast with accounts from the past. History, like seasons, can mean different things to different people.

The seasonal cycle calendars can be used in many ways, such as inspiration for artworks, discussion points for storytelling, points of contact and contexts to ask questions of the local community and Elders, even as an alternative way to plot and interpret annual weather data in our locality.

### Teacher's note



This unit is an excellent complement to the 'Earth, Moon and Sun: Night and Day' unit in the companion book *Tools for Teachers 4 – Years 3&4*. That unit focuses on the planets; this unit focuses on what seasons mean to culture and history.

